

By Mohammad Jamil

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Last week, US Assistant Secretary of State Robert Blake had said: “We are putting in place a wide range of bilateral cooperation to reflect that level of engagement. The five pillars - Strategic Cooperation; Science, Technology, Health, and Innovation; Energy and Climate Change; Education and Development; Economics, Trade, and Agriculture - encompass virtually all of the key challenges facing the globe today”. This was a prelude to the forthcoming meeting between President Barack Obama and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Looking at the above agenda, one should not pin hopes on President Obama that he would persuade India to address Pakistan’s concerns regarding her support to insurgents in Pakistan, because American and European countries eye big market comprising more than one billion people and also gains from so-called civil nuclear agreement. Amnesty international has in time exposed Indian human rights abuses and in its letter has urged President Obama to raise the issue of mass human rights violations in Kashmir when he meets Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at the White House on 24th November 2009. It gave details of human rights abuses including rape, extra-judicial executions, torture, degrading treatment, arbitrary arrests and dowry deaths.

“The abuses are facilitated by the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act of 1958 and other similar laws. The civilian population of Kashmir has paid a high price for the conflict. Thousands have disappeared over the years. People living in several of the north-eastern states of India and in Kashmir, religious minorities, those belonging to the lowest social order called ‘Dalits’, and indigenous communities called ‘adivasis’ face the brunt of these abuses”, the AI pointed out. In August 2009, **the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF)** placed India on its “Watch List” for its inadequate response in protecting its religious minorities.

USCIRF

said: "India earned the Watch List designation due to the disturbing increase in communal violence against religious minorities - specifically Christians in Orissa in 2008 and Muslims in Gujarat in 2002 - and the largely inadequate response from the Indian government to protect the rights of religious minorities". But the US leadership always turned a blind eye to India's atrocities on its minorities and its hegemonic designs against its neighbours.